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The Process of the Islamic Marriage Contract and Wedding (Nikah) Ceremony

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful!

The ideal time of the year to get married:

The prophetic tradition maintains that it is preferred for one to get married during the Islamic month of Shawwal, and there is also merit in taking one's bride in the house during this particular month. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Aisha (RA) reportedly said: **"Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) contracted marriage with me in Shawwal and took me to his house as a bride during Shawwal; and who among the wives of Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) was dearer to him than**

I. Thus, I liked that the women (of her family) should enter the houses as brides during the month of Shawwal."

Conditions of a marriage contract:

I. Bride and groom

A marriage contract must include two parties namely the bride and groom. However, unlike the bride, the groom does not require representation from a wale (A "Muslim" male guardian from the father's side such as the father, brother, grandfather, uncle, etc.). The only possible exception for the groom would be if he was mentally ill. Furthermore, if the bride does not have a Muslim wale, then the Judge in an Islamic society or if living in a non-Islamic society, then either the Shaykh of her community or the Shaykh/Imam from the closest masjid becomes her wale. The wale of the bride can also nominate another male to assume the responsibilities of this role even if he is not related to the bride. What makes the transfer of waleship valid is the permission of the bride's original wale. For example, a wale from Egypt who has a daughter living in Canada can appoint a friend of his to be his daughter's wale if he cannot afford to travel to another country in order to oversee the actual marriage contract. All that is required is for him to say I agree to give my daughter in marriage and I appoint so-and-so to act as her wale. Furthermore, the bride and groom are not even

required to reside in the same country during the drawing up of the marriage contract. They can actually nominate representatives living in a third country to act on their behalf with regard to the drawing up of the marriage contract.

Location of the Nikah

The actual nikah does not have to be conducted in a specific place. The nikah can either be held at the local masjid, at home, in someone's backyard, in one's basement, at a park, in a restaurant, at a community center, or at any other location provided that it complies with the Islamic guidelines of purity; i.e., no indecency, obscenities, intoxicants, etc. However, it is the sunnah to perform the nikah in the masjid. The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Aisha (RA) narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Publicize these marriages, conduct them in mosques, and beat the duff (tambourines) to announce them.**'" Furthermore, it is important to remember that extravagance and waste are extremely disliked in Islam. This fact is evident from Surah Al-An'am (6:141) of the Quran which reads: "**.....But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not the wasters.**"

II. Two adult and sane witnesses:

In an Islamic marriage contract the two witnesses are generally male Muslims. However, non-Muslim males are

acceptable. Furthermore, the Hanafi Madhab also permits one man and two women, whenever a second male is unavailable. It is also important to note that the two witnesses do not have to be in attendance. They only need to be informed that they have been selected as witnesses to the marriage between so-and-so, and informed about the terms of the marriage contract. The marriage contract of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA) was witnessed by at least two persons from among the Bani Hashim and the heads of Mudar. This fact is also evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said **"There is no marriage except with a Wale and two witnesses."** Furthermore, even if the witnesses are later discovered to be among those classified as false witnesses, their testimony will still serve as valid evidence proving that the couple were in fact married. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha reportedly said: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'It is essential to have the consent of a virgin (for the marriage).' I said, 'A virgin feels shy.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.); said, 'Her silence means her consent.' Some people said, 'If a man falls in love with an orphan slave girl or a virgin and she refuses (him) and then he makes a trick by bringing two false witnesses to testify that he has married her, and then she attains the age of puberty and agrees to marry him and the judge**

accepts the false witness and the husband knows that the witnesses were false ones, he may consummate his marriage.'"

However, if the husband or wife were fully aware that the witnesses were false prior to marriage, then both of them will be sinful. However, there is no blame on any innocent party in this matter. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith of Bukhari wherein Umm Salama (RA) narrated: **"Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) heard some people quarreling at the door of his dwelling, so he (P.B.U.H.) went out to them and said, 'I am only a human being, and litigants with cases of dispute come to me, and someone of you may happen to be more eloquent (in presenting his case) than the other, whereby I may consider that he is truthful and pass a judgment in his favor. If ever I pass a judgment in favor of somebody whereby he takes a Muslim's right unjustly, then whatever he takes is nothing but a piece of Fire, and it is up to him to take it or leave it (can be honest and not proceed or proceed with what benefits him and later be punished by Allah's Hellfire)**.'"

- In an unforeseen situation such as being stranded on a deserted Island, a man and woman can marry themselves with Allah and his Angels serving as witnesses to the union; because, deeds are based on their intentions, which in this instance is to comply with the lawful practice of marriage

to the best of one's means versus engaging in zina (lewd sexual acts such as fornication and adultery).

III. Terms of the marriage contract/offer and acceptance:

The terms of the marriage should be discussed; such as for a woman to stipulate that she desires to attend college to obtain a degree in order to obtain a particular profession. This is an important part of the marriage process because some Muslim husbands do not desire that their wife should work for a living. Likewise, a Muslim husband should stipulate whether he desires to marry additional wives; because, some women are extremely jealous and desire to be their husband's only wife.

It is also important to note that no wife can prevent her husband from acquiring additional wives, nor does he have to ask for her permission; because, Allah has granted the Muslim husband the right to acquire up to four wives if her can provide for them and treat them justly. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Nisa (4:3 and 4:129) of the Quran which reads: **"If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice."** Also, **"Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women (wives), even if**

it is your ardent desire: But turn not away (from a wife) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, and practice self-restraint, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." What is more, a newly engaged female cannot stipulate that her suitor divorce his current wife in order to obtain her hand in marriage. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "**It is not lawful for a woman (at the time of wedding) to ask for the divorce of her sister (i.e. the other wife of her would-be husband) in order to have everything for herself, for she will take only what has been written for her.**" Lastly, in the Muwatta of Imam Malik, it is related: "**Malik said, 'The custom among us is that when a man marries a woman, and he makes a condition in the marriage contract that he will not marry after her or take a concubine, it means nothing unless there is an oath of divorce or setting-free attached to it. Then it is obliged and required of him.**" In summary, since divorce is in the hands of the husband, he must stipulate in the marriage contract that his wife will be granted the option to divorce him if he reneges.

IV. Pre Nikah speech or Khutba Nikah (marriage sermon)

It is highly encouraged that a brief speech or Khutba (sermon) be recited before the actual Nikah formula is enunciated.

Sermon in Arabic:

إِنَّ الحَمدَ لله ، نَستَعِينُهُ وَنَستَغفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِهِ مِن شُرُورِ أنفُسِنَا ، مَن يَهدِهُ اللهّ فَلا مُضِلَّ لَهُ ، وَمَن يُضلِل فَلا هَادِيَ لَه ، وَأشهَدُ أن لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهّ وَأَشهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبدُهُ وَرَسُولُه .

يَا أيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالاً كَثِيراً وَنِسَاء وَاتَّقُواْ اللهّ الَّذِي تَسَاءلُونَ بِهِ وَالأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللهّ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيباً

يَا أيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللهّ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلاَّ وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

يَا أيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُواَ اللهّ وَقُولُوا قَوْلاً سَدِيداً يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَن يُطِعْ اللهّ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً

Person performing the Nikah Khutba

The nikah khutba is to be performed by the Imam or a knowledgeable person who is scheduled to conduct the marriage. The sermon includes the three verses of Taqwa, and a hadith or two about marriage exhorting the couple and those present to fear Allah and attain Taqwa as stipulated by Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, and Ahmad. Furthermore, the Khutba should be structured so that Allah is praised for His Wisdom in regulating the lawful process of marriage and procreation.

The evidence for the marriage sermon is the historical account of the marriage between the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA) from the narration of Tabari wherin he reported the following in Tareekh At-Tabari: "Abu Talib, the uncle of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) made a speech on his behalf saying, '**Praise be to Allah, Who has made us from the progeny of Abraham (P.B.U.H.) and the offspring of Ishmael, ... Mohammed Ibn Abdullah, my nephew, is one that none of the youth of Quraysh is comparable to, unless he is preferred to him by his piety, virtue, determination, reason, discernment, and nobility. Though he is of little money, money is merely a transient shadow and a loan that shall be given back. He has a wish towards Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA), and she has like that. Whatever dowry you would like I shall pay ...**'"

Reciting the Khutba Nikah (marriage sermon)

According to a hadith from Tirmidhi that was narrated by Ibn Masud, "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) taught the following for Khutba Nikah: 'Innal Hamda lillahi, nastaeenuhu wa nastaghfirhu, wa naoozu billahi min shorrori anfusina. Man yahdihi Allahu fala mudhilla lahu wa mayn yudhlil fa la hadia lah. Wa ash hadu al la ilaha il lal lah wa ash hadu an na Muhammadan abduhu wa rasooluhu**.'"

شُرُورِ مِن بِهِ وَنَعُوذُ ، وَنَسْتَغفِرُهُ نَسْتَعِينُهُ ، لِلَّهِ الحَمدَ إِنَّ

هَادِيَ فَلا يُضلِل وَمَن ، لَهُ مُضِلَّ فَلا اللَّهُ يَهدِهِ مَن ، أَنفُسِنَا

وَرَسُولُه عَبدُهُ مُحَمَّدًا أَنَّ وَأَشهَدُ اللَّهُ إِلا إِلَهَ لا أَن وَأَشهَدُ ، لَه

This translates into English as: "Praise be to Allah, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is His slave and Messenger."

After reciting this initial statement, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) would recite the following verses from the Quran; namely, Surahs Al-Nisa 4:1, Al-Imran 3:102, and Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71. However, the following invocation against Satan should be recited before commencing with the recitation of the Quran: "A'uzu billahi minashaitanir rajim [I seek refuge in Allah from the rejected and accursed Satan.] Then say Bismillah [In the name of Allah] Al-rahman [The most Gracious] Al-Raheem [The most merciful]."

Surah Al-Nisa 4:1, "O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you."

وَخَلَقَ وَاحِدَةٍ نَّفْسٍ مِّن خَلَقَكُم الَّذِي رَبَّكُمُ اتَّقُواْ النَّاسُ أَيُّهَا يَا

الَّذِي اللّهَ وَاتَّقُواْ وَنِسَاء يراًكَثِ رِجَالاً مِنْهُمَا وَبَثَّ زَوْجَهَا مِنْهَا

رَقِيباً عَلَيْكُمْ كَانَ اللّهَ إِنَّ وَالأَرْحَامَ بِهِ تَسَاءلُونَ

Surah Al-Nisa 4:1 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha alnnasuittaqoo rabbakumu

allathee khalaqakum min nafsin wahidatinwakhalaqa minha zawjaha wabaththa minhumarijalan katheeran wanisaan waittaqoo Allahaallathee tasaaloona bihi waal-arhamainna Allaha kana AAalaykum raqeeban"

Surah Al-Imran 3:102, "O you who Believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and see that you do die not except in the state of submission to Allah."

حَقَّ اللَّهَ اتَّقُواْ آمَنُواْ الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا

مُّسْلِمُونَ وَأَنتُم إِلاَّ تَمُوتُنَّ وَلاَ تُقَاتِهِ

Surah Al-Imran 3:102 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha allatheena amanooittaqoo Allaha haqqa tuqatihi walatamootunna illa waantum muslimoona"

Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71, "O you who Believe! Fear Allah and say the right thing. Allah will make your conduct (affairs) whole and sound and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained to a great success."

قَوْلاً وَقُولُوا اللَّهَ اتَّقُوا آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا

ذُنُوبَكُمْ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ لَكُمْ يُصْلِحْ سَدِيداً

عَظِيماً فَوْزاً فَازَ فَقَدْ وَرَسُولَهُ اللَّهَ يُطِعْ وَمَن

Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha allatheena amanooittaqoo Allaha waqooloo qawlan sadeedan; Yuslih lakum aAAmalakumwayaghfir lakum thunoobakum waman yutiAAi Allahawarasoolahu faqad faza fawzan AAatheeman"

According to Abdul Malik Mujahid, there are several principles, which these verses present; namely, by asking for Taqwa, which can basically be translated as, piety acquired from constantly being mindful of Allah and being fearful that one can lose Allah's love and mercy whenever they do not live and enjoin a lifestyle that complies with the commandments set forth by Allah. Furthermore, Taqwa is being emphasized four times in these Quranic verses to clearly stipulate the key principle in which a sound and stable marriage/family life is to be

established upon. This is the primary reason why anytime the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) performed a marriage sermon, he considered it imperative to encourage those believers pursuing marriage to fear Allah and to avoid earning His displeasure. Likewise, if a couple desires to be successful in their marriage, they will constantly be mindful of Allah and will elect to stay away from what has been prohibited and enjoin only what has been recommended.

Abdul Malik Mujahid also maintains that Taqwa (piety) is not just reflected in worship and Halal (permissible) types of marriage. It also requires clear communication between the spouses. This is the reason why immediately after encouraging the believers to acquire Taqwa, Allah instructs them to adopt proper speech by saying only what is right and good. Furthermore, since it is also acknowledged that all humans are derived from Prophet Adam (P.B.U.H.) and his wife (RA), we are therefore considered one community. Likewise, by mentioning the process of creation, Allah is emphasizing an analogy wherein the institution of marriage actually plays a similar role in the existence of mankind; thus, indicating that through marriage, mankind is fulfilling its role in the sacred process of creation which Allah has established; because, Allah does not recognize any type marriage that is not comprised of a man and a woman.

Recite the following hadith from the collection of Bukhari wherein Anas (RA) reported: "**.... The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'By Allah! Among all of you I am the most God-fearing, and among you all, I am the best suited to save myself from the wrath of Allah, yet my state is that I observe prayer and sleep too. I observe fast and suspend observing them; I marry woman also. And he who turns away from my Sunnah has no relation with me.'**" Thereafter, the ceremony usually draws to a close with the Muslim conducting the actual marriage ceremony making a sincere prayer (duaha) for the bride and groom, their families, the guests, and the entire Muslim community as a whole. Furthermore, the closing remarks should reiterate that marriage is one-half of one's religious duty to Allah; and as such, engaging in it is regarded as an act of worship. This fact is evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Anas ibn Malik (RA) reportedly said: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When a man marries he has fulfilled half of the deen; so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.'**"

After performing the Nikah Khutba

After those assembled for the sermon of nikah have been addressed by the Muslim officiating the marriage, the actual ceremony of nikah should begin. Furthermore, in Islamic societies, a state appointed judge (Qadi) keeps the record of

the marriage contract. The documents of the marriage contract are also filed with the masjid and local government for public record. It is also important to note that some masajid/Imams have the legal capacity to solemnize a marriage which is then recognized by the state, county or local council, which is extremely advantageous in that it prevents a couple from having to re-perform their marriage in a state mandated civil ceremony.

V. The Nikah Ceremony:

The Imam or person performing the actual marriage ceremony will proceed by asking the groom or his representative (1) if he gives consent to the bride's (taking her complete name) marriage (2) to the groom (again taking the complete name) (3) for the stipulated amount of marriage payment (4) in the presence of the two witnesses. If the representative consents then the Imam turns to the groom and asks him if he accepts the bride (taking her name) in his marriage for the stipulated amount of marriage payment. The groom has to reply in complete terms such as, "I accept her in my marriage" or "I have accepted her in my marriage" or "I do marry her." It is preferable that he say this and not just "I do" or "I accept."

All the scholars agree that the "offer from the bride's wale and acceptance from the groom" (Al-Ijaab wa al-qubul) is among the arkan (requirements) of a marriage. If both parties

are willing to comply with the terms of the contract, they will proceed by having the Wale of the bride say something to the effect of, "I present the daughter of so-and-so to you as your bride for specified dowry," or "I on behalf of so-and-so present the daughter of so-and-so to you as your bride for said dowry," and the groom will say, "I, the son of so-and-so accept the hand of the bride as my wife in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for the specified dowry; or a representative of the groom will say, "I, on behalf of the groom, the son of so-and-so, accept the hand of the bride as his wife in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for the specified dowry requested by the bride. This practice is evident from the sunnah; because, both Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah (RA) finalized their marriage by exchanging two terms of acceptance; such as I, Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) take you Khadijah (RA) as my wife, and I Khadijah (RA) take you Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) as my husband.

Congratulate the groom on his marriage to his bride:

Next, the Imam or person performing the marriage ceremony will congratulate the groom by reciting the following duah as detailed in the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

الخَيْرِ فِي بَيْنَكُمَا وَجمَعَ عَلَيْكَ وَبَارَكَ لَكَ اللّٰهُ بَارَكَ

"Barak Allahu laka wa baraka alayka wa jama'a baynakuma

bikhayr." This translates into English as: "May Allah bless you and have His blessing descend upon you and unite you in goodness." The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Abu Hurayrah (RA) who reportedly said: "**When a man contracted a marriage with his bride, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would say to him, 'May Allah bless you and bless it for you and may He join you with goodness**!'"

At this point, the actual marriage is established. Therefore, the groom should then present the bride with her requested wedding gift (mahr/dowry) as a sign of appreciation for blessing him with the honor of becoming his wife. It is also important to note that regarding the dowry of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah (RA), the historical reports maintain that the actual dower was fixed at twelve and one - half okks of gold, which is equivalent to the price twenty camels. There are additional historical reports which declare that the dowry was fixed at 500 dirhams which was equivalent to the price of twenty camels; likewise, that Abu Talib paid the dowry on his behalf; and that Khadijah (RA) actually gave the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) 4,000 dinars as a gift and urged him to pay it to her uncle as the dowry. Furthermore, although the actual dowry is not a requirement for the wedding contract to be valid, it is advantageous to specify what the actual dowry will be and the

terms surrounding its delivery to the bride, in the actual contract in order to avoid future confusion from ensuing. The evidence proving that the actual marriage has been established prior to the bride receiving a dowry is Surah Al-Nisa (2:236) of the Quran which reads: **"There is no blame on you if ye divorce women before consummation or the fixation of their dower; but bestow on them (A suitable gift); the wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means. A gift of a reasonable amount is due from those who wish to do the right thing."**

VI. Mahr/Dowry (wedding gift to the bride) is to be paid either immediately (muajjal) or deferred (muakhkhar), or a combination of both:

Since the actual dowry does not have to be paid in full at the time of the marriage, if the female agrees to these terms, it is therefore not a requirement to make the marriage contract valid. However, whatever the amount or particular items that the bride requested, it must be paid to her, even if it comes out of the estate of the groom after his death. It is also important to note that the dowry is entitled solely to the bride. After Khadijah's wale, her uncle, agreed to accept the proposal of Mohammed on her behalf, Khadijah then agreed to a dowry of twenty she-camels. However, even though the offer of a dowry

must be presented to a bride, she is permitted to forfeit receiving the entire amount or part of it. The evidence for providing one's wife with a marriage gift is Surah Al-Nisa of the Quran (4:4) which reads: **"And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, Take it and enjoy it with right good cheer."** Furthermore, as regards the value of the actual dowry, Islam has not set a minimum or maximum requirement or even specified what it must be, as long as the female is willing to accept it. This fact is also evident from Surah Al-Nisa of the Quran (4:20) which reads: **"...even if ye had given the latter a whole treasure for dower..."** Furthermore, for those who possess no actual wealth but are willing to ignore this fact in order to get married can actually teach a verse or a single word of the Quran as a dowry. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Sahl bin Sad As-Sa'idi reportedly said: **"A woman came to Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and said, 'O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! I have come to give you myself in marriage (without Mahr).' Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) looked at her. He looked at her carefully and fixed his glance on her and then lowered his head. When the lady saw that he did not say anything, she sat down. A man from his companions got up and said, 'O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! If you are not in need of her, then marry her to me.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Have**

you got anything to offer?' The man said, 'No, by Allah, O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)!' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said (to him), 'Go to your family and see if you have something.' The man went and returned, saying, 'No, by Allah, I have not found anything.' Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, '(Go again) and look for something, even if it is an iron ring.' He went again and returned, saying, 'No, by Allah, O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! I could not find even an iron ring, but this is my Izar (waist sheet).' He had no rida. He added, 'I will give half of it to her." Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'What will she do with your Izar? If you wear it, she will be naked, and if she wears it, you will be naked.' So that man sat down for a long while and then got up (to depart). When Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) saw him going, he ordered that he be called back. When he came, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'How much of the Quran do you know?' He said, 'I know such Sura and such Sura,' counting them. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Do you know them by heart?' He replied, 'Yes.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Go, I marry her to you for that much of the Quran which you have.'"

- The bride is not obliged to give the groom anything at the time of the wedding, as is done in some cultures; because, the husband is being honored by the hand of the wife in marriage.

Make duah for the couple and those in attendance:

As recommended by Abdul Malik Mujahid, the Muslim official who conducted the actual marriage ceremony should recite duahs on behalf of the couple and the attendees; something to the effect of, "May Allah bless your marriage with the beauty of the marriage of Ayesha and her husband, may Allah be pleased with her. May Allah guide you both on the steps of Taqwa and may He provide the two of you with good communication in your relationship. May Allah bless the earth with your progeny who we pray will be better than us toward their Creator and His Creation. May Allah help us all reaffirm our commitments to each other. May Allah give Barakah (blessings) to the families of the bride and groom. May Allah bring them closer. May Allah make you a model family that will invite humanity to follow the guidance of its Creator."

VII. Provide entertainment at the wedding

In accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) those in attendance of the wedding should be provided with halal entertainment that does not promote unlawful mixing of the sexes and the use of prohibited musical instruments. The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha narrated that she prepared a lady for a man from the Ansar as his bride and the Prophet said, **"O 'Aisha! Haven't you got any amusement**

(during the marriage ceremony) as the Ansar like amusement?"
Nevertheless, Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (RA) reportedly said: "But the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made allowances for certain types of musical instruments at weddings and the like, and he made allowances for women to play the daff (duff) at weddings and on other joyful occasions. But the men at his time did not play the daff or clap with their hands." Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid further reports that it was also narrated in al-Saheeh that he said: "Clapping is for women and tasbeeh (saying Subhaan Allah) is for men." And he cursed women who imitate men and men who imitate women. Because singing and playing the daff are things that women do, the Salaf used to call any man who did that a mukhannath (effeminate man), and they used to call male singers effeminate – and how many of them there are nowadays! It is well known that the Salaf said this.

Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid also reported, "In a similar vein is the hadith of Ayesha (RA), when her father, Abu Bakr (RA) entered upon her at the time of Eid, and there were two young girls with her who were singing the verses that the Ansaar had said on the day of Bu'aath – and any sensible person will know what people say about war. Abu Bakr (RA) then said: "Musical instruments of the Shaytan in the house of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)!" The Messenger of Allah

(P.B.U.H.) had turned away from them and was facing the wall – hence some scholars said that Abu Bakr (RA) would not tell anybody off in front of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), but he thought that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was not paying attention to what was happening. And Allah knows best. He (the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "**Leave them alone, O Abu Bakr, for every nation has its Eid, and this is our Eid, the people of Islam**." This hadith shows that it was not the habit of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions (RA) to gather to listen to singing; hence Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (RA) called it "The musical instruments of the Shaytan." And the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) approved of this appellation and did not deny it when he said, "**Leave them alone, for every nation has its Eid and this is our Eid**." This indicates that the reason why this was permitted was because it was the time of Eid, and the prohibition remained in effect at times other than Eid, apart from the exceptions made for weddings in other ahaadeeth. Shaykh al-Albaani explained this in his valuable book Tahreem Aalaat al-Tarab (the Prohibition of Musical Instruments). The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) approved of young girls singing at Eid, as stated in the hadith: "**So that the mushrikeen will know that in our religion there is room for relaxation**." There is no indication in the hadith about the two young girls that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was listening to them. The commands and prohibitions have to do with listening,

not merely hearing, just as in the case of seeing; the rules have to do with intentionally looking and not what happens by accident. So it is clear that this is for women only. Imam Abu ‘Ubayd (RA) defined the daff as, "that which is played by women.'"

Lastly, according to Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid, "If Islam differentiates between two things, such as the duff and the tablah (another kind of drum), then they are definitely not the same and there is a difference between them which dictates that they should come under different rulings. The difference between the duff and the tablah is that the sound of the duff is less stirring and it has less of an effect on the soul than the tablah. The hollow space inside of the tablah causes vibration and a more stirring sound, which does not happen with the duff, because it has no hollow space inside, and its sound is also less powerful than that of the tablah. For this reason the Islamic shariah forbids the kind of duff that has jangling pieces of metal around it (i.e., tambourine), because the jangling pieces make more of a stirring sound than the duff that does not have them. The daff is the least stirring of all musical instruments; hence, the reason why the shariah has permitted it in certain instances, such as announcing a wedding and making it well known among the people."

VIII. Consummating the marriage as husband and wife

After the terms of the marriage contract has been fulfilled, the specifics of the dowry agreed upon, and the actual nikah ceremony has been performed, the bride and broom at this point are now lawfully regarded as husband and wife in Islam. The couple is now permitted to expose their awrah to one another, inherit as a lawful heir according to the guidelines established by Allah, and enter the home together in order to consummate their marriage.

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